X. THE CRUCIFIXION. MARK 15:22-37

Executions were very squalid affairs. The crosses would have been set up by the town rubbish dump and normally the bodies would have been left to rot on their makeshift gibbets.

Mark records Jesus's words from the cross (15:22-37). Some people say, "What a holy man! Even to the very last he was quoting from the Scriptures, because this is in fact the first line of *Psalm* 22". Others say, "Jesus, being human, felt totally abandoned by God." But however we interpret them, we have preserved a very cruel joke by the bystanders: "He's calling on Elijah!" (who was supposed to appear before the Messiah came.) They say this because Jesus's words, "Eloi, Eloi," sound like "Eliyah, Eliyah". The whole story of Jesus's Passion hangs together. The orderliness of the account emphasises a theological point: these events had been planned by God as the culmination of the mission of "The Suffering Servant".

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